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“Prospects for Peace in Darfur”
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INTRODUCTION

Good morning, and thank you Chairman Hyde and ranking Member Lantos for calling this morning’s hearing. I am pleased to join you and speak on behalf of the Administration. President George W. Bush takes the issue of Sudan seriously. For that very reason, he has made the push for peace in Sudan a centerpiece of his Africa agenda. President Bush has directed the members of his Administration to play a leadership role internationally in the effort to resolve the situation in Darfur. Just as U.S. government commitment and leadership helped to resolve the 22-year-long North-South element of the Sudan conflict, the President’s goal has been for the United States to lead the way toward stability and peace in Darfur.

On April 30, I had the opportunity to speak for the Administration to the thousands of concerned Americans who gathered for the Save Darfur rally. Given this nation’s history of supporting freedom and fighting against oppression and genocide, these citizens are right to be engaged. I affirmed to those assembled that bringing peace to Darfur is a top priority for their elected officials, and that the Administration is working diligently toward a resolution.

Darfur is a severe humanitarian crisis of major proportions. Over 220,000 civilians have fled their homes and become refugees in neighboring Chad. There are approximately two million Darfurians who are internally displaced. Hundreds of thousands have died from famine, disease, and violence. Hundreds of villages have been burned and looted, and there has been and continues to be widespread, egregious violence against women and girls, including rape.

The U.S. government has demonstrated bold leadership on Darfur in a number of ways, including the official determination of genocide in September 2004. The United States remains the only nation to make such a determination, and U.S. government officials have aggressively sought a political solution for Darfur as the best way to implement a just and lasting peace.

FROM NEGOTIATION TO SETTLEMENT

The first week of May marked an important turning point in the negotiations that had been underway in Abuja, Nigeria, for some time. On May 1, I joined Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick on a trip to Abuja in an effort to support the African Union (AU) mediation and work out a settlement on the established timeline.

On May 5, the Sudanese Government and the largest military rebel group in Darfur led by Minni Menawi signed the Darfur Peace Agreement. The Darfur Peace Agreement was the culmination of sustained and successful mediation by the African Union, bolstered by senior level U.S. and international diplomatic efforts. The Agreement represents an important step forward in this process toward peace and

reconciliation. It also marks an historic opportunity to build a peaceful, democratic, and secure future for the people of Darfur.

The international community is making a concerted effort to persuade those groups that have not signed the DPA, namely the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Abdel Wahid-led faction of the SLM, to sign. These parties must understand that failure to sign the DPA will mean they have no voice in the reconstruction and political leadership of Darfur. We are working steadily to bring these groups back into the process and onto the side of peace.

Much work lies ahead to successfully implement the Darfur Peace Agreement. U.S. efforts will be focused on a number of areas in the coming days and months. The first involves strengthening the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) in the short term, while also pressing for immediate United Nations Security Council action to authorize deployment of a peacekeeping mission for Darfur. President Bush asked Secretary Rice to go to the United Nations Security Council last week to push for a UN Security Council Resolution to move the process forward. A resolution was passed on May 16th. President Bush also instructed U.S. government officials to work with the AU and NATO to finalize details regarding the bolstering of AMIS. AMIS should be commended for its efforts to date.

We are also working to identify areas where we can provide immediate assistance for successful implementation of the political and wealth-sharing aspects of the Darfur Peace Agreement. It is important to bring the people of Darfur into the peace process. This includes offering a clear explanation of the Darfur Peace Agreement and what it means for peace in the region. The Darfur-Darfur Dialogue, a key element of the Agreement, will be critical to the success of this process. The United States also plans to support those who stand for peace.

At the same time, we are working with the African Union to encourage all parties to sign the agreement. They must seize the opportunity to achieve peace and democratic change in Sudan.

THE AGREEMENT ITSELF

The May 5 Abuja Agreement has three key elements. The first involves security arrangements, the second involves political power sharing, and the last involves wealth sharing. With regard to security, this Agreement requires complete, verifiable disarmament of the Janjaweed militia by mid-October 2006. The Agreement delineates various milestones toward this goal, and there is a detailed sequencing that requires the Janjaweed and other armed militias to completely disarm before rebel forces assemble and prepare for their own disarmament. Following this process, there will be strong rebel force representation in the leadership positions – officers and commanders – of the Sudanese Armed Forces.

In the political sphere, the Agreement outlines a power-sharing consensus that gives the fourth most senior position within the Sudanese Government of National Unity (GNU) Presidency to the rebel movements. This new job, Senior Assistant to the President and Chairperson of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA), is

designed to allow the person who performs it to oversee the implementation of the DPA in Darfur, while also serving as the senior representative of Darfur in Khartoum. The Agreement also sets out a democratic process for Darfurians to choose their leaders and determine the status of Darfur as a region. Specifically, no later than July 2010, a popular referendum will allow the people of Darfur to choose whether to establish Darfur made up of the current three states with a regional government or retain the status quo of three states with no regional government.

Lastly, the Agreement offers a plan for wealth sharing within Sudan. The GNU is slated to create a fund for Darfur's reconstruction and development. Initially, the GNU will contribute \$300 million, and then the GNU will contribute at least \$200 million for each of the following two years. The international community is additionally committed to holding a donors' conference to pledge additional funds for Darfur, and the Chairperson of the TDRA will be invited to present a summary of the region's needs and priorities at this donor gathering. The Agreement establishes a commission to work with the UN to help refugees and displaced persons return to their homes, while also creating a commission to provide compensation to victims of the conflict. The GNU has agreed to make an initial \$30 million deposit into this compensation fund.

This Agreement is comprehensive in its reach. If this Agreement is implemented as it is written, this will be a great accomplishment and enormously beneficial for the civilians, who have suffered so much in this conflict.

WORKING TO END THE SUFFERING

The Bush Administration's commitment to a political solution in Darfur reflects the American people's fervent desire to see an end to the suffering of the people there. As President Bush recently noted: "Osama bin Laden attacked American efforts in Sudan and urged his followers to kill international peacekeepers in Darfur. Once again, the terrorists are attempting to exploit the misery of fellow Muslims and encourage more death. Once again, America and other responsible nations are fighting misery and helping a desperate region come back to life. And once again, the contrast could not be more clear."

The Bush Administration strategy for Darfur has operated along three tracks. There has been a political negotiation track ongoing in Abuja, a large-scale humanitarian and peacekeeping effort to help affected individuals in the region, and a diplomatic track at the United Nations in New York. The United States has played a leading role in the UN Security Council for action on Sudan and Darfur, and we seek a speedy transition from the African Union's force to a larger UN peacekeeping operation. The U.S. has also pursued targeted sanctions on individuals who have sponsored violence, as well as any individuals who impede the peace process.

WORKING WITH CONGRESS

Congressional support for U.S. government assistance in Sudan has been critical. It has allowed us to be the number one provider of assistance to Sudan. Our current estimates for fiscal year (FY) 2006 envision a continuation of the \$1.3 billion funding level obligated in FY 2005. The Administration remains committed to providing such assistance.

On behalf of the Bureau for African Affairs and the U.S. State Department, I would like to thank the House of Representatives for its continued generous support. We will use funds provided to continue our support to AMIS, to strengthen its ability to protect civilians, and to implement the Darfur Peace Agreement. Strong support for AMIS is vital right now. As the mission transitions from an African Union to United Nations-led operation, such support buoys and helps with the implementation of the recent Agreement.

COMPREHENSIVE PEACE AGREEMENT

Darfur has clearly been an urgent and pressing issue on the international stage. It is appropriate that we have rallied our resources and offered a strong response. However, it is also important that we not only focus on Darfur but remain focused on implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which ended the 22-year civil war between the north and south of Sudan. This is critical to ensuring lasting peace and democracy throughout Sudan.

The CPA has reached a series of milestones. These include: the inauguration of the Government of National Unity and the formation of the Government of Southern Sudan, the formation of the Assessment and Evaluation Commission, and revenue sharing between the North and South regions of Sudan. Key flashpoints remain ahead, including the East and Abyei, and the United States continues to urge the Sudanese Government of National Unity to address these issues. The U.S. is also urging the rapid formation of the Joint Integrated Units called for by the CPA, which have been slow to develop, but will be important for maintaining security in the years ahead.

U.S. bilateral and multilateral assistance in southern Sudan is supporting key ministries in the Government of Southern Sudan; building schools, health centers, water points, and roads; helping refugees and displaced persons return and reintegrate into home communities; training the Bank of Southern Sudan; and helping with demining. The U.S. also supports the national census, which is critical for elections to proceed, assists with the transformation of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) from a guerilla force into a viable national army, and training for nascent political parties. In sum, we are supporting the goal of a Sudan that is at peace and prosperous. These elements underscore the comprehensive nature of U.S. assistance to the people of Southern Sudan, as well as the institution building nature of such aid. This work is laying the foundation for democratic rule and stable, good governance for many years into the future.

CONCLUSION

The Darfur Peace Agreement helps chart a path for lasting peace in yet another region of a country too long ravaged by war. It will establish a framework for a democratic process that will allow the people of Darfur to choose their own leaders and determine the final status of Darfur as a region. While this is an important step forward, Darfur remains a violent and very troubled place where individuals' suffering has not yet ended.

Much hard work remains. The United States intends to continue assisting the people of Sudan as the President committed in his May 8th speech to increase food assistance to Darfur, even though the U.S. government is already providing 85 percent of the food distributed by the World Food Programme. The U.S. also urges other donor nations to join in providing: substantial food aid, development and reconstruction assistance, and support for the creation of a robust United Nations peacekeeping operation to protect civilians and create the conditions that will allow displaced persons to return safely to their homes.